



24<sup>th</sup> October 2014

Diocesan Education Service,  
Don Bosco House,  
Coventry Road,  
Coleshill,  
B46 3EA

Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School  
Trittiford Road  
Yardley Wood  
Birmingham  
B13 0EU

Dear Mrs O'Shea

### **Section 48 Monitoring inspection:**

Thank you for the welcome you, your staff and pupils gave to me when I inspected your school on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2014 and for the information you provided both before and during the inspection. I am grateful for the time given by all including the chair of governors, who is also the parish priest in speaking with me.

The inspection was a "light touch" monitoring inspection because your school was judged at the last section 48 inspection to be an outstanding school and because it is now five years or more since you last received a diocesan inspection.

The purpose of the inspection was to assess the quality of the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning for Catholic life and religious education. In order to make this judgement I attended a whole school Mass; read school documents, including a summative self-evaluation; interviewed senior leaders, the previous and current subject leaders for RE, and pupils, observed three (part) lessons, and looked at a sample of pupils' written work. In addition, I gathered evidence of some of the outstanding practice in the school as part of a diocesan wide survey of good practice in Catholic life and religious education.

### **Catholic Life**

The school self-evaluation judges the quality of its Catholic life and collective worship to be outstanding. The evidence gathered during the inspection shows that this judgement is accurate and fully justified. The Catholic life of Our Lady of Lourdes is deeply rooted in the school because of the commitment to the faith of the headteacher and her senior leadership team. Staff at all levels are dedicated and wholehearted in their support of the school. They receive frequent guidance and inspirational support from the parish priest who is also the chair of governors. The school and the parish working together is a real strength of the school and the school benefits from being next to the Church. The school has both informal and formal processes in place which enable staff, parents and governors to contribute and make their views well known. The feedback from the staff questionnaires in February 2014 shows that all members of staff consider that the Catholic ethos of the school is very good or excellent. Parents' views were similar in their response, again affirming the quality of the Catholic life of the school. Parents requested a copy of the school prayer book for their use at home. This was actioned and has developed family prayer in the home. Pupils' views on Catholic life are sought through the school council. They appreciate the yearly visit to St Chad's Cathedral and the bi-annual pilgrimage to Lourdes in France. Children have recently requested that various types of music be incorporated into the liturgy and this is being considered by the liturgy co-ordinator. Children are proud to be part of the school community. They know the school's mission and as well as living, loving and learning together, they included worshipping together. They are very clear about the values that underpin the school's work.

Prayer and collective worship are at the centre of daily school life in which children participate with reverence and enthusiasm. Music is used very effectively in collective worship to enhance the prayerful experience for all children. Collective worship is now being evaluated by the liturgy co-ordinator who is a valued member of both the school and parish community and her work strengthens the links between the school and the parish. Links have been developed with the local secondary school chaplaincy team who have supported the development of meditation in school. They are currently training the Year 5 and 6 pupils to become chaplaincy leaders. Children lead prayer times



including the Rosary, the Angelus and the Wednesday Word in other classes. Governors are fully informed about the Catholic life of the school and know the school well for themselves as they are a supportive presence within the school community.

## Religious Education

Self-evaluation accurately judges progress in RE to be outstanding. RE is monitored in a variety of ways through lesson observations, monitoring planning, book trawls, learning walks and pupil discussions. Lesson observations of all members of staff are carried out by all senior leaders and findings are fed back to staff, reinforcing the high expectations that are held by them. The school is rightly proud of the quality of their RE lessons; nothing but good or better is acceptable. The quality of teaching greatly impacts on pupils' spiritual, moral and vocational development. Teachers use higher order questions which ensures that all pupils are being challenged. Full advantage is taken of opportunities to develop pupils' thinking skills in all areas of learning in RE. Children are enthusiastic and engaged in their learning. In the pupil interviews that took place in April 2014, pupils were asked specific questions which related to both the attainment targets and in pupils' books there was some evidence of success criteria being linked to attainment target 2; learning from religion. Rigorous assessment is in place. The school follows the diocesan requirements as well as assessing the children at the beginning and end of each unit. The progress of all groups of learners is carefully monitored and intervention is put into place as and when required. Children clearly enjoy their work in RE and benefit enormously from it. Classrooms are excellent spaces for learning with good quality displays celebrating the children's work.

The curriculum is carefully planned and based on the Diocesan Strategy *Learning and Growing as the People of God*. All members of staff seek ways to support and enrich the curriculum and they are well supported by the RE subject leader. The curriculum is enhanced by the use of excellent resources including scripture, art, ICT and video clips. The curriculum provided opportunities for pupils to explore values and beliefs and gives the children the opportunities to ask questions. This is evident in 'wonder and awe' books and displays in the classrooms.

A particularly outstanding aspect of the Catholic life of the school is the home, school and parish partnership. The dedication of the headteacher and all members of staff with the support from the parish priest and all the governors working together, means that the faith is always at the heart of the school. The children make outstanding progress in RE year on year as all groups of learners are tracked and supported. These outstanding aspects have been used as subjects for the purpose of a survey identifying best practice in the Archdiocese of Birmingham.

The school self evaluation is clearly accurate and reliable. This is an outstanding school both in its Catholic life and in the teaching and learning of RE. The governors and senior leaders have successfully identified all the necessary areas for improvement and have ensured the capacity to remain an outstanding school where children will continue to grow in their faith.

Yours sincerely

Sister Susan Collins  
Diocesan Inspector